1 CLAIMS

2 What is claimed is:

3

4 1.   A method for time-stamping and managing electronic

5 documents, comprising:

6   obtaining respective time-stamp certificates for a

7 plurality of documents, the documents and the certificates

8 having associated identifiers;

9   building a database of document identifiers and associated

10 certificate identifiers; and

11   storing the documents and the certificates.

12

13 2.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising chronologically

14 linking related documents by date and time of certification.

15

16 3.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising constructing

17 chronologically ordered sets of documents in accordance with

18 user specified relationships.

19

20 4.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

21   reading textual description information pertaining to the

22 documents; and

23   associating the description information with the document

24 identifiers in the database.

25

26 5.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising associating a

27 subject with the document identifiers in the database.

28

29 6.   The method of Claim 3, further comprising associating a

30 time-stamp with the document identifiers in the database.

31

32 7.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising obtaining the

33 certificates from an outside agency.

34

1 8.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising soliciting from a
2 user a document identifier for a document to certify.
3
4 9.   The method of Claim 8, further comprising presenting a
5 browse mode to a user for selection of the document to certify.
6
7 10.   The method of Claim 8, further comprising soliciting from a
8 user a description of the document to certify.
9
10 11.   The method of Claim 8, further comprising soliciting from a
11 user a subject to associate with the document to certify.
12
13 12.   The method of Claim 11, further comprising presenting a
14 browse mode to a user for selection of the subject.
15
16 13.   The method of Claim 12, further comprising creating a new
17 subject in response to user input.
18
19 14.   The method of Claim 8, further comprising soliciting from a
20 user a thread identifier to associate with the document.
21
22 15.   The method of Claim 14, further comprising presenting a
23 browse mode to a user for selection of the thread.
24
25 16.   The method of Claim 15, further comprising creating a new
26 thread in response to user input.
27
28 17.   A system for time-stamping and managing electronic
29 documents, comprising:
30   a document manager configured and arranged to generate
31 requests for time-stamp certificates for electronic documents,
32 store the documents and corresponding time-stamp certificates,
33 and generate document identifiers and certificate identifiers
34 that respectively correspond to the documents and time-stamp
35 certificates;

1   a certificate generator coupled to the document manager,

2   and configured and arranged to generate time-stamp certificates

3   in response to the requests from the document manager; and

4   a database coupled to the document manager and including

5   associations of document identifiers and certificate identifiers

6   generated by the document manager.

7

8   18.   The system of Claim 17, further comprising a certification

9   interface coupled to the document manager and further coupled to

10 the certificate generator via a network, and configured and

11 arranged to transmit the requests from the document manager to

12 the certificate generator and the time-stamp certificates from

13 the certificate generator to the document manager.

14

15 19.   The system of Claim 17, wherein the database further

16 includes associations of subjects with the document identifiers.

17

18 20.   The system of Claim 17, wherein the database further

19 includes one or more threads indicating chronological

20 relationships between the documents.

21

22 21.   The system of Claim 17, wherein the database further

23 includes:

24   associations of subjects with the document identifiers;

25   one or more threads indicating chronological relationships

26 between the documents:

27   textual descriptions of the documents; and

28   time-stamps for the documents.

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